

School District Redistricting Commission

August 2006

Dear Education and School Leaders from Maricopa County:

As you know, the School District Redistricting Commission (SRDC), charged through Senate Bill 1068, is continuing its work on crafting K-12 unification redistricting plans that will be placed on the November 2008 ballot. We encourage school board leadership, superintendents and others interested in the issue to provide the Commission with ideas, guidance and any creative suggestions toward these efforts.

We will be addressing initial redistricting options for Maricopa County and other county redistricting options at an extensive Commission meeting set for **Monday, August 28th at 2:00 pm** at ASU's Decision Theatre (<http://dt.asu.edu/>) in Tempe. We prefer to go into this process with your input received by our meeting on the 28th. Understanding busy schedules present challenges, we still invite you to offer partial input by this critical date, as well as more complete options for the commission to consider by September 30th.

That input could include your vision of how your district could be unified and your rationale for it. To better balance the make up of a district, we have had suggestions that include taking a school or two from one district and placing them in another. *(An example of input from a district includes one from the Alhambra Elementary District, which you can find on the SDRC web site at www.ade.az.gov/sdrc.)* Options can vary; but ideas from leaders representing the following districts are key:

Buckeye Union High School District
Liberty Elementary District
Buckeye Elementary District
Arlington Elementary District
Palo Verde Elementary District
Glendale Union High School District
Washington Elementary School District
Glendale Elementary District
Phoenix Union High School District
Phoenix Elementary District
Riverside Elementary District
Isaac Elementary District
Wilson Elementary District
Osborn Elementary District
Creighton Elementary District
Murphy Elementary District
Balsz Elementary District
Madison Elementary District

Laveen Elementary District
Roosevelt Elementary District
Alhambra Elementary District
Cartwright Elementary District
Tempe Union High School District
Tempe School District
Kyrene Elementary District
Tolleson Union High School District
Tolleson Elementary District
Fowler Elementary District
Union Elementary District
Littleton Elementary District
Pendergast Elementary District
Agua Fria Union High School District
Avondale Elementary District
Litchfield Elementary District
Tempe Union High School District

Background

During the 2005 Arizona Legislative Session, Senate Bill 1068 passed with bi-partisan support and was signed by Gov. Janet Napolitano. The bill established a 13-person School District Redistricting Commission. The Commission is charged to:

review all current common school districts that are not part of a unified school district and consider combining these common school districts into a new unified district or combining common school districts with a union high school district to create unified districts. . .

School District Redistricting Commission
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www.ade.az.gov/sdrc

The legislation further states that the Commission's recommendations may include enlarging or diminishing the size of affected school districts but shall also include unorganized territories within recommended unified districts where practicable. The Commission may also determine that an existing common school district should remain a common school district and not be included in a new unified school district recommendation.

We would also like to highlight that the legislation requires the Commission to “consider the recommendations of the governing boards of the affected school districts,” and to consider recommendations of any and all stakeholders. This second letter is one of many ways in which we are soliciting input.

Timeline

The Commission has been hosting monthly meetings and has held three public forums throughout the state. An initial effort on redistricting efforts took place August 1st at ASU’s Decision Theatre and have a planned second meeting at that same location for a focus on viable redistricting options in Maricopa County.

By April 30, 2007, the commission is to have drafted a preliminary report on the proposed school district redistricting plan. And by that same date, the preliminary report is to be submitted to the governing boards of the affected school districts.

By July 31, 2007, the Governing Boards of the affected school districts shall have reviewed the preliminary report and may submit comments to the Commission. The comments may include specific recommendations to modify the proposed unification plan and/or recommendations of one or more alternative redistricting plans.

By December 31, 2007, the Commission is to have considered the recommendations of the Governing Boards of the affected school districts and then is to have designed and submitted to the Governor a proposed school district redistricting plan.

Then finally, in November of 2008, each county school superintendent with a school district affected by the proposed school district redistricting plan shall call an election within the boundaries of the proposed unified school district to adopt the plan as proposed by the Commission.

A full copy of the legislation can be found on the SDRC web site at www.ade.az.gov/sdrc.

Considerations

The Commission has a list of elements and considerations to effectively complete its work, encompassing those mandated by the statute. This list is by no means complete or prioritized. It is merely a list of the variety of items that will be considered as we continue to follow our charge:

Aligning curriculum K-12	Primary and secondary tax issues
Administrative positions	Potential for more effective use of facilities
Governing boards	Political and municipal boundaries
Teacher salaries and schedules	Tax rates
Instructional and non-instructional support services	Which schools students attend when they move from a common district to a high school district
Travel time of students	Career ladders
Budgeting	Excess utilities expenditures
Contractual obligations	Desegregation expenditures
Capital debt	Student demographics
Capital overrides previously accumulated	English language learner percentage
Legal liability	Small and/or isolated designation
Acquisition of legal liabilities	AIMS and AZ Learns designation
School district overrides	Expenditure per pupil
New district names, numbers	Percentage of special education students
District geographic boundaries	
Enrollments	

Get involved

As we have done from the beginning, and will continue to do, we invite you to give us your ideas relating to redistricting. Below is a contact list of Commission members to make it easy for you. Additionally, you can attend the Commission meetings, e-mail or mail us with your thoughts. The dates of the Commission meetings are posted on the SRDC web site found at www.Ade.az.gov/sdrc/.

- Ms. Vicki Anderson, retired teacher/school librarian (602) 993-4996
- Mr. Jay Blanchard, ASU College of Education, former state legislator (480) 965-1499
- Dr. Sandra Dowling, Maricopa County School Superintendent (602) 506-3661
- Ms. Doris Goodale, President, Kingman Unified School District Mohave Co. (928) 715-7807
- Mr. Art Harding, Arizona Department of Education (602) 364-1952
- Mr. Michael Hunter, Asst. Executive Director for Government Affairs – Arizona Board of Regents (602) 229-2520
- Ms. Rita Leyva, Chief Deputy, Yavapai County Education Service Agency (928) 442-5141
- Mr. George A. Martinez, Director of Institutional Advancement, Glendale Community College/Maricopa Community College District (Co-Chairman of the Commission) (623) 845-3605
- Mr. Dave Naugle, Corporate Public Affairs, Southwest Gas Corporation, governing board member, Sonoita Elementary School District #25 (520) 247-9686
- Mayor Thomas Schoaf, business owner, Litchfield Park, former board member of Litchfield Elementary School District (623) 935-2681 ext. 225
- Dr. Kent Scribner, Superintendent, Isaac School District (602) 484-4112
- Mr. Martin L. Shultz, VP Government Affairs, Pinnacle West Capital Corporation, former teacher and administrator (Chairman of Commission) (602) 250-2866
- Mr. Joseph Thomas, teacher, Mesa Unified School District (480) 472-9523

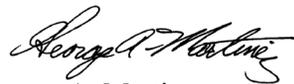
We invite you to share this update with your colleagues on your various school boards, within your districts and elsewhere in time for our next meeting on August 28th and on an ongoing basis throughout this process.

Thank you for your time and input toward our school redistricting charge.

Cordially,



Martin L. Shultz
Chairman, SDRC
VP of Government Affairs
Pinnacle West Capital Corporation



George A. Martinez
Co-Chairman, SDRC
Director of Institutional Advancement
Glendale Community College/Maricopa Community
College District